

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 5481

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, KS

SUBJECT: NDP CONVENTION

1. THE NDP LEADERSHIP RACE HAS CONTINUED IN BACKGROUND WHILE COURT MARTIAL DEVELOPMENTS, SPECIAL NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SESSION AND SHOOTING OF MADAME PARK HAVE HELD PUBLIC ATTENTION. IN SPITE OF DEATH OF MADAME PARK NDP HAS DECIDED TO HOLD CONVENTION ON SCHEDULE AUGUST 22-23. ACTING PARTY PRESIDENT KIM UI-TAEK HAS OFFICIALLY ENTERED RACE BRINGING TOTAL OF REGISTERED CANDIDATES TO FIVE.

2. MOST POLITICAL OBSERVERS HAVE LITTLE BUT ACADEMIC INTEREST IN OUTCOME OF LEADERSHIP RACE AND NDP ASSEMBLYMEN THEMSELVES ADMIT THAT OUTCOME WILL HAVE LITTLE EFFECT ON DOMESTIC SCENE. NEVERTHELESS CONTENDERS CONTINUE ACTIVE FACTIONAL MANEUVERING ALONG LINES FOLLOWED SINCE YU CHIN-SAN'S DEATH. INDIVIDUAL FACTIONAL LEADERS ARE NOW BUSILY MEETING WITH DELEGATES ARRIVING IN SEOUL.

3. KIM YONG-SAM HAS MADE MOST OF HIS ANTI-GOVERNMENT IMAGE, RECENTLY BY ATTEMPTING TO PROTEST CIA INTER-FERENCE WITH HIS CAMPAIGN ON NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FLOOR. KIM'S SUPPORT AMONG ASSEMBLYMEN, HOWEVER, REMAINS CONFIDENTIAL

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RELATIVELY WEAK.

4. KO HUNG-MUN HAS STILL NOT MADE COMMON CAUSE WITH KIM, ALTHOUGH SPECULATION IS THAT THEY MAY JOIN FORCES AFTER FIRST BALLOT IF ONE SEES HE HAS NO CHANCE. KO HAS RELIED ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY ON PERSONAL CONTACT WITH DELEGATES AND LARGE HANDOUTS OF CASH FOR SUPPORT, BUT FIRM SUPPORT HARD TO MEASURE SINCE MANY DELEGATES ARE RECEIVING MONEY FROM TWO OR MORE CANDIDATES.

5. YI CHOL-SUNG IS OUTWARDLY MOST CONFIDENT OF CONTENDERS. HE HAS CAMPAIGNED ENERGETICALLY ON A PLATFORM OF RESTRAINED OPPOSITION TO REGIME. HE IS CONSIDERED ACCEPTABLE TO THE GOVERNMENT AND THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS THAT HE HAS RECEIVED FINANCIAL BACKING FROM GOVERNMENT. CHONG HAE-YONG REMAINS WEAKEST OF CONTENDERS. SEVERAL NDP ASSEMBLYMEN SPECULATE THAT HE IS IN RACE TO BE ABLE TO BARGAIN FOR HIGH PARTY OFFICE WITH EVENTUAL WINNER.

6. KIM UI-TAEK ALTHOUGH PERSONALLY WEAK IS SUPPORTED BY SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF OLD YU CHIN-SAN FACTION. ONE OF KIM'S BACKERS, SECRETARY GENERAL SIN TO-HWAN, TOLD EMBOFF THAT SINCE NONE OF THE FOUR ORIGINAL CANDIDATES HAD SIGNIFICANT LEAD IN RACE HIS GROUP MAY BE ABLE TO RETAIN LEADERSHIP OF PARTY THROUGH KIM.

7. SPECIAL CONVENTION COMMITTEE HAS ANNOUNCED RECOMMENDATION THAT NEW PARTY CONSITUTION ABOLISH OFFICES OF VICE PRESIDENTS AND CONCENTRATE POWER IN POLITICAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE WHOSE CHAIRMAN WOULD BE NUMBER TWO MAN IN PARTY. THIS TYPE OF THINKING IS CONSISTANT WITH LEADERSHIP CONCEPT ADVOCATED BY SUPPORTERS OF KIM UI-TAEK.

8. PARTY HAS DECIDED TO LIST NAMES OF THE FIVE CANDIDATES ON BALLOT WITH NO PROVISION FOR WRITE INS. IN LAST DAYS BEFORE CONVENTION THERE IS GENERAL CONSENSUS THAT FIRST BALLOT WILL SPLIT FAIRLY EVENLY BETWEEN FIVE CONTENDERS. THERE IS NO FIRM CONSENSUS ON EVENTUAL OUTCOME OF RACE FOR LEADERSHIP.
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